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AUTHOR Schuster, Tracy J.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an action plan for integrating multicultural theory into a teacher education social foundations course and presents results from an evaluation of this effort. The action plan for the course was to integrate the theory and practice of multicultural education across five master questions posed by T. Berg (1999) and in the context of five dimensions of multicultural education defined by J. Banks (1995). "Schools in Communities" was planned as an undergraduate course to introduce students to the foundations of education by studying social, philosophical, and historical aspects of U.S. culture. Through the use of the five master questions and the five dimensions of multicultural education, students were to focus on the forces and influences that guide the U.S. education system and the individual classroom. Among the features of the course were the use of texts representing the diversity of students, including examples from children's literature, and a variety of enrichment experiences, ranging from speakers through videos and interactive technology. Students also conducted an ethnographic study of a school. The responses of 27 students (7 African American, 18 Caucasian, 1 Arab) showed gains in their appreciation of the complexity of education and the relationship between schools and society. Twelve of the students commented that they really enjoyed the class, and 14 said that the class had opened their eyes to many educational issues. An appendix contains the course syllabus and some supplemental information. (SLD)

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Running Header: BRIDGING THE GAP

Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice: Integrating Multicultural Theory into an Undergraduate Foundations of Education Class

Tracy J. Schuster
University of South Carolina

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Abstract:

Higher education is looked upon as an ideal institution for learning new and diverse things. It's the place that demands of its inhabitants a commitment to inquiry and reason in an attempt to understand what is known and what is yet to be discovered. Alone, the university classroom is a place where minds can be opened to new perspectives and opportunity. Thus, a multicultural approach to teaching that incorporates the diversity of students within the post-secondary classroom, as well as the ideas of those not represented becomes an appropriate and necessary method through which to guide instruction. The following is an action plan on how to integrate multicultural theory into social foundations instruction in teacher education.

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Rationale

Higher education is looked upon as the ideal institution for learning new and diverse ideas. It is a setting that demands of its inhabitants a commitment to inquiry and reason in an attempt to understand what is known and what is yet to be discovered. Alone, the university classroom is a place where both minds and doors can be opened to new perspecti and opportunity. Thus, a multicultural approach to teaching that incorporates the diversity of students within the post-secondary classroom, as well as the ideas of those not represented becomes an appropriate and necessary method through which to guide instruction. With regards to teacher education programs, an understanding of such diversity naturally fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complex relationships that exist between American education and society.

Theoretical Frameworks

One, and perhaps the most important, purpose of undergraduate educational foundations courses is to provide students with a framework to critically analyze American education and its relationship with society from multiple perspectives. (Young, 1996; Edwards, 2000) Multicultural education as defined by Sleeter and Grant (1994) is an education that reflects and supports diversity by addressing areas of curriculum, tracking, staffing, and testing, and by fostering a culturally pluralistic classroom. Consequently, their approach to multicultural education through reflecting and supporting diversity, complements the design of most foundations courses.

The goal of this action plan is to integrate the theory and practice of multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 1994; Banks, 1995) across five master questions (Berg, 1999) used

to guide *Schools in Communities*, an undergraduate foundations of education course at the University of South Carolina. Two theoretical frameworks: Berg's (1999) Five Master Questions and Banks' (1995) Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education will be used to achieve this integration. While Sleeter and Grant's definition of multicultural education will guide the overall thrust behind this action plan, Berg's Five Master Questions (5MQ's) and Banks' dimensions of multicultural education will guide general teaching practices and day-to-day lesson plans.

Berg's 5MQ's are guiding questions that can be applied towards issues in American education and provide a framework to help students analyze the field. These questions include: 1) What is the nature of the learner, 2) What is the purpose of education, 3) What should be taught/learned, 4) How should we teach that which should be taught/learned, and 5) What is the relationship between schools and society? Adding Banks' dimensions to the 5MQ's helps to open these questions and possible answers to diverse and critical insight into the American educational system. These dimensions include, 1) content integration, 2) knowledge construction, 3) prejudice reduction, 4) equity pedagogy, and 5) empowering school culture. By focusing heavily on content integration, knowledge construction, and equity pedagogy at this time, it is hoped that prejudice reduction and an empowered school culture will be the likely outcomes of the successful implementation of this plan. By understanding how knowledge is constructed, multiple perspectives on such knowledge, and the power of democracy in the classroom, students' prejudice perspectives will most likely be altered. By making space for diversity in the classroom, students will become empowered through their understanding and appreciation for diversity in the classroom.

Content integration is the level to which teachers use examples and information from a variety of cultures or groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, or theories. (Banks, 1995, 4) Foundations courses, as well as many college courses, rely heavily on reading both books and articles to cover traditional content including educational history, philosophy and sociology. Providing a variety of readings that come from a variety of authors and perspectives is one way to promote content integration throughout the course. In addition to this, the use of popular media, technology and guest speakers can be included. Specific titles and examples are discussed in the **General Changes** section of this paper.

Knowledge construction assumes that knowledge is socially constructed, thus it is neither fixed nor is it created within a vacuum. One of the major purposes of foundations courses is to provide future teachers with a framework through which to critically reflect upon the institution of American education. (CLSE, 1997, 7) This critical reflection and analysis of education can be used to investigate knowledge construction in the field of education as well. A look at Banks' (1996) five types of knowledge including: 1) personal/cultural, 2) popular, 3) mainstream academic, 4) transformative academic, 5) and school, can be used to categorize what students know and how they know such things. In return this can be compared to what schools and society value as knowledge. For example, an understanding of knowledge construction can be used to investigate the discussion of Master Questions 3 (What should be taught/learned?) and 4 (How should we teach that which should be taught/learned?).

Equity pedagogy (Banks, 1995) is the result of the practice of teaching methods that support and promote the achievement, both cognitive and affective, of students from diverse backgrounds. Perhaps the most efficient and meaningful way to accomplish such equity in the classroom is by answering Master question 2 (What is the purpose of education?) as it relates to

equal educational opportunity and through an investigative approach at defining and understanding democracy in the United States and the practice of democratic teaching. By closely examining democracy, what it means for all students, and how it is applied to America's educational system, students can examine their own perspectives of pedagogy.

Critical discussions of democracy are not enough, however. Teaching practices must promote democracy as well. Jennings, O'Keefe & Shamlin (1999) draw upon the analysis of educational scholars such as Freire, Dewey, and Greene to argue for democratic practices in the classroom. They base their argument on their shared idea that democracy can transform students from passive entities to students who are actively engaged in their learning and sense-making of their world, as well as make informed choices regarding their learning. Two main tools will be used to promote such practice in the *Schools in Communities* classroom. First, students and teachers will begin the semester by laying out expectations for all with regards to participation in and formats for discussions (eg. large group, small group, individual presentations). Secondly, students and the professor will collectively determine the criterion for assigned projects and share in the evaluation of such projects.

George Wood (1987) recognizes that many social foundations courses are too removed from practice, fail to tie issues of history, philosophy, and sociology together, and end up covering content that is too broad (a catch-all course). Instead, Wood proposes that the central purpose of social foundations instruction in teacher preparation programs should link future practice to a precise understanding of the role and purpose of education in a democratic society. (1987, 65) In order to accomplish such an objective, Wood has established three goals: 1) examine current purposes of education, 2) evaluate such purposes based on principles of a democratic society, and 3) explore alternatives that strive towards a democratic education.

Master Question 2 provides the venue for such an investigation and evaluation of education. Wood's goals, however, can easily be applied to all five Master Questions that guide the course, discussions, and student writing.

Overview of the plan

Schools in Communities is an undergraduate foundations course that introduces students to the foundations of education by studying social, philosophical, and historical aspects of American culture. Through the use of Berg's 5MQ's and Banks' five dimensions of multicultural education, students will examine classical and current educational issues and dilemmas in philosophy, history, and sociology, and come to better understand the forces and influences that guide the American educational system, as well as, the day-to-day events within the classroom. Additionally, by focusing on the experiences of a diverse group of master teachers and personal teaching experiences from the EDUC 400 *Service Learning* practicum associated with this class, students will better understand themselves as both educators and students. The responsibilities of the learner in this course include, 1) that they read assignments on time, think about the ideas contained in them, and come to class prepared to discuss them intelligently, 2) that they attend all class meetings, as discussions will add a great deal to student learning and how they think as a teacher, and 3) they can read, think, analyze, interpret and write at the level of a college student.

Specific steps

This plan looks at six general changes that can be made to the current social foundations curriculum of *Schools in Communities*. Five sample lesson plans are also included to specifically examine how the theory of multicultural education can be woven into day-to-day practice. At this point, I realize that this is not an exhaustive action plan. There is always room for reflection, growth and change. Thus, this is the first attempt at improving the design of *Schools in Communities* at the University of South Carolina, but not the last.

Six General Changes in the Curriculum and Instruction

1) A selection of texts that represent the diversity among the voices that make up American education is provided to students in this course. Students are required to select one teacher biography (or a book similar to a biography) and write a reflection paper on how the teacher(s) in these books answer the 5MQ's. Allowing students to choose the teacher whom they'd like to study gives them the opportunity to connect with teachers from similar cultures or ethnic backgrounds, or learn from teachers of diverse cultures or ethnic backgrounds. The combination of student choice and diverse sample of texts provides space for Banks' dimensions of content integration and equity pedagogy. A list of possible titles is located below. This list is not all-inclusive, and students are encouraged to add to it.

<u>Elementary Educators</u>

Urban poverty perspectives

- *Educating Esme': Diary of a Teacher's First Year,* by E. Codell
- *Among School Children,* by T. Kidder

African-American perspectives

- *Dreamkeepers*, by G Ladson-Billings

<u>Junior High/Middle School Educators</u>

- *1st year teacher,* by R. Bullough
- *1st year teacher 8 years later,* by R. Bullough

Secondary Educators

African-American rural perspective

- *The Water is Wide,* by P. Conway

African-American perspective

- *Black Teachers on Teaching,* by M. Foster

Urban vocational school perspective

- *The Blackboard Jungle,* by E. Hunter
- *Up the Down Staircase,* by B. Kaufman

Suburban perspective

- *Horace's Compromise,* by T. Sizer

Urban perspective

- *Vertigo*, by L. De Salvo

Apartheid education perspective

- *Crossing the Boundaries*, by William Finigan
- *Walking the Tightrope*, by Elizabeth De Villiers

2) Children's literature that discusses multicultural and educational issues can be used to facilitate discussions and model good teaching. A list of such titles is listed below. Reading aloud children's literature to the class will be used to open up discussion on a variety of topics as related to the 5MQ's, as well as show students one possible answer to MQ's 3 and 4. Again, this diversity of books relates to the dimension of content integration. It also touches on knowledge construction, as some of these books (*Encounter,* a story of Christopher Columbus as told from a Native American perspective) provide historical information from diverse perspectives.

Picture Books

Master Question 1 (What is the nature of the learner?)

The Big Box, by Toni Morrison
Crow Boy, by Taro Yashima
A One-Room School, by Bobbie Kalman
Paper Bag Princess, by Robert Munsch
Rose Blanche, by Roberto Innocenti
Rough-Face Girl, by Rafe Martin
Shelterfolks, by V. Kroll
Stellaluna, by Janell Cannon
Tough Boris, by Mem Fox
Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge, by Mem Fox

Master Question 2 (What is the purpose of education?)
I Never Knew Your Name, by Sherry Garland
I'm in Charge of Celebrations, by Byrd Baylor
The Keeping Quit, by Patricia Polacco
Nappy Hair, by Carolivia Herron
Nathaniel Talking, by Eloise Greenfield
The Story of Ruby Bridge, by Robert Coles
Sunshine Home, by Eve Bunting
Tar Beach, by Faith Ringgold
Hooray for Diffendoofer Day, by Seuss et al

Master Question 3 (What should be taught/learned?)
Annie and the Old One, by Miska Miles
The Art Lesson, by Tomie De Paola
Faithful Elephants, by Yukio Tsuchiya
To Hell with Dying, by Alice Walker
Granddad Bill's Song, by Jane Yolen
The Great Kapok Tree, by Lynne Cherry
Let the Celebrations Begin, by Margaret Wild
Morning Girl, by Michael Dorris
Now One Foot, Now the Other, by Tomie De Paola
Old Turtle, by Douglas Wood
Orphan Train, by James Magnuson
Pink and Say, by Patricia Polacco
A River Ran Wild: An Environmental History, by Lynne Cherry
Seven Brave Women, by Betsy Gould Hearne
And Still the Turtle Watched, by Sheila MacGill-Callahan
The Talking Eggs, by Robert San Souci
Women of Hope, by Joyce Hansen

Master Question 4 (How should we teach that which should be taught/learned?)
Encounter, by Jane Yolen
First Grade Takes a Test, by Miriam Cohen
Knots on a Counting Rope, by John Archambault

Master Question 5 (What is the relationship between schools and society?)
Baseball Saved Us, by Ken Mochizuki
Fly Away Home, by Eve Bunting
How My Parents Learned to Eat, by Ina R. Friedman
Someplace to Go, by M. Testa
Terrible Things, by Eve Bunting
Thank-you Mr. Faulkner, by Patricia Polacco

3) Guest speakers and experts from all educational arenas will be brought into the classroom to speak with students. This includes bringing in students, teachers, administrators, and

professors, as well as, parents, counselors, legislators and community leaders. Based on their positions or titles, the speakers will be able to address and discuss with students various master questions. The diversity of these speakers' backgrounds and jobs addresses Banks' dimensions of content integration as well.

Examples
School District Superintendent
Dr. Epp, Superintendent of Richland I School District
University Professor
Heidi Mills, Center For Inquiry Magnet School
Government Officials
Inez Tannenbaum, State Superintendent of Schools
Educational Specialists
Jennifer Somerindyke, *Educating Homeless Children*

4) Videos and technology can be used to tap into current and historical educational and societal issues. The discussion and evaluation of these materials and their value to the field will be incorporated into the course. The use of such media also provides another venue for learning and content integration.

Websites to visit

An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform	http://www.aasa.org/Reform/approach.htm
Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (k-12)	http://www.elob.oriz/
Coalition of Essential Schools	http://www.essentialschools.org/
Education Week	http://www.edweek.org/
Middle Web	http://www.middleweb.com/
Catalog of School Reform Models	http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog/index.html
Accelerated Schools Project (k-8)	http://www.stanford.edu/group/ASP/
Core Knowledge (k-8)	http://www.coreknowledge.org/
High Schools That Work (9-12)	http://www.sreb.org/Pro2rams/hstw/high.html
Paideia (k-12)	http://www.unc.edu/paideia/

Small Schools by Design http://catalyst-chicago.org/05-98/058wmm01a.htm

Rethinking Schools http://www.rethinkingschools.org/Index.htm

Fordham Foundation http://www.edexcellence.net/

Videos

Class Divided (1985) by William Peters
Color of Fear (1995) by Le Mun Wah
Fear in Learning at Hover Elementary (1996) by Laura Angelica Simon
Higher Learning (1995) by John Singleton
Savage Inequalities (1990) by Jonathan Kozol

5) Students will conduct an ethnographic investigation of a school, specifically looking at how it addresses the 5 Master Questions. Students will spend time documenting their observations of all areas of schools including hallways, cafeterias, offices, classrooms, and playgrounds. General approaches recommended by Glesne (1999) and Jennings (1998) will be used to help students gather qualitative data. Students will take their recorded observations and analyze them by looking for relationships between and answers to the 5 Master Questions. This ethnographic approach can help students uncover invisible or subtle practices of inequality in public schools, and provide examples of arguments for equity pedagogy.

6) Fieldtrips will be used to provide experiences for students that cannot be created within the university classroom. The class will take field trips to local charter, magnet, and private schools, as well as, administrative buildings to understand through personal experience the diversity that exists between and within America's school systems. Naturally, students will examine and compare/contrast how these institutions address the 5MQ's. These diverse fieldtrips relate to Banks' dimensions of content integration and knowledge construction.

Such hands-on experiences provide students with the opportunity to construct their own knowledge of such places as opposed to adhering to popular opinions.

Places to Visit

- Magnet schools
  - Center for Inquiry
  - Center for Knowledge
- Administration offices and school board meetings
  - Richland 1 (Urban) and Richland 2 (Suburban) Districts
- Governmental offices
  - SC Department of Education
  - SC Center for Teacher Licensure

Five Sample Lesson Plans

The following are five sample lesson plans, one for each master question.

Master Question 1: What is the nature of the learner?

Objective: Using Banks' dimension of knowledge construction, students will understand what constitutes the nature of the learner and how the nature of the learner can be better understood by understanding the culture or ethnic background from which the students come from.

Action: Students will reflect upon their own educational history by making note of the times and experiences that influenced their nature or attitude towards learning. This reflection will then be compared to public norms and attitudes regarding the natures of learners from various cultures or ethnic backgrounds.

Master Question 2: What is the purpose of education?

Objective: Using Banks' dimension of knowledge construction, students will understand the history behind schools as we know them today. Through this time traveling, students will also investigate American schools through the

perspectives of a panacea, an oppressor, a political institution, and a social institution.

Action: Students will research and create a timeline of important events and issues in American educational history. Students will find and describe specific instances where American schools served as a panacea to society, an oppressor to society, a political institution and a social institution, and show how these historical instances form trends within and effect education today.

Master Question 3: What should be taught/learned?

Objective: Using Banks' dimensions of content integration and knowledge construction, students will understand the relationships between school curricula and the textbook industry, and how this relationship affects the history and values taught.

Action: A variety of textbook samples from a variety of subject areas will be brought into the classroom. The students will analyze and evaluate the textbooks based on criterion of the awareness of multiple perspectives and sensitivity to diversity. The students will also assess knowledge construction within these textbooks and answer questions regarding whose knowledge is valued and portrayed in such books?

Master Question 4: How should we teach that which should be taught/learned?

Objective: Using Banks' dimension of content integration and equity pedagogy, students will understand the variety of methods available for teaching and identify best practice.

Action: Students will view and discuss a variety of videotaped lessons from a variety of teachers teaching at various grade levels and subjects. Students will analyze and reflect upon the methods used by these teachers in their lessons and how these methods provide for or take away from student diversity and the diversity of ideas through instruction.

Master Question 5: What is the relationship between schools and society?

Objective: Using from Banks' dimensions of knowledge construction and empowering culture, students will understand the problems that plague society and how these problems affect America's classrooms.

Action: Students will choose a social problem to investigate. Sociological, historical, economical and political aspects of this problem will be researched to construct a lesson plan that can be taught in the public schools to promote student awareness of and activism towards the particular social problem.

Outcomes

Making space for diversity in the classroom empowers students through the understanding and appreciation for diversity in the classroom. Berg's 5MQ's and Banks' dimensions of multicultural education including content integration, knowledge construction, and equity pedagogy provide a framework for undergraduate teacher education students to critically look at America's educational system, and to promote prejudice reduction and an empowered school culture.

There are three essential outcomes of this action plan. First, the students will outgrow their personal understandings of schools and their relationships with communities. Second, the

students will develop an understanding and appreciation for diversity in our classroom, as well as future classrooms where current students will be teaching. Finally, the students will increase their awareness of the many faces of teachers and students, as well as, teaching and learning.

Obstacles

There are three main obstacles to implementing this action plan. First, this plan will clearly take a lot of time to both prepare and execute. Since there are topics outside of the obvious realm of multiculturalism that must be discussed in this class, it's imperative that integration remains as the focus and tool for content presentation. Second, it is possible that the effects and impact of this action plan on students' perspectives won't be seen immediately. Instead, it will become more and more evident through samples of students' writing as they begin to make connections between schools and the 5MQ's, and draw conclusions regarding their own answers to the questions. Additionally, a survey of students' learning and attitudes will be conducted at the end of the course to evaluate progress and understanding. Unfortunately, I have no way of knowing at this point whether or not this course will affect the teaching practices of my students. Such knowledge will require long-term conversations with students. Finally, I can't expect to change everyone's thoughts in my class, nor would I want to. Denial on the part of some students, however, cannot be underestimated. Some students are simply resistant to change. I can only surround them, however, with an array of information and various sides of educational arguments in hopes that it may at some point begin to open their eyes to the diversity that surrounds them.

Findings

At the end of the course, the students were asked to complete an Exit Slip (see appendix). The purpose of the Exit Slip was to give students the opportunity to reflect upon the variety of information and issues that were addressed over the course of the semester, as well as look back on personal changes in how the students answered questions concerning such information and issues. The Exit Slip contained a variety of questions posed in a variety of formats. For example, the first part of the evaluation asked the students to complete the following statement, "I used to think _____ about schools and communities, but now I know_____." Consequent questions addressed: 1) how students have grown in their understanding and appreciation for diversity, 2) how the 5 Master Questions guided the students through their growth and development as educators, 3) how the use of children's literature in the class to introduce ideas enhanced their understandings of various issues in education, 4) how guest speakers shed light on a variety of topics and furthered the students understandings of the field of education, 5) how practicum experiences in *EDUC 400: Service Learning* influenced or deepened the students' understandings of the relationship between schools and communities, and 6) how the use of fieldtrips could possibly add to the quality of the course. In all, there were twenty-five students who completed the Exit Slips. As a whole, there were twenty-seven students in the class, seven were African-American, eighteen were Caucasian, and one was Arabic. The Exit Slips were completed in the classroom on the final day of the class.

The students' responses to the Exit Slip questions varied in their overall growth concerning the understanding of multicultural aspects and their role in undergraduate teacher preparation courses, specifically foundational courses. When asked to complete the following statement, "I used to think _____ about schools and communities, but now I

know_____," the students showed great gains in their appreciation for the complexity of the field of education, schools, and teaching. For example, ten of the students stated that they used to think quite little about the schools and their relationship to communities. They felt that there was no relationship between schools and communities, and that schools and communities were easy to maintain. If there were problems with schools, then it was assumed that such problems were out of their control. Eleven of the students stated that their ways thinking about schools and communities completely changed. For example, they used to think positively about schools – everyone's needs were met and that most conditions for learning were good. Likewise, some of these students used to think negatively about schools, and that the problems facing schools were the fault of schools. Finally, students stated that they thought they knew just about all there was to know about the relationship between schools and communities, and that there was just one set of rules or standards necessary to govern all schools.

Twenty of the students reported that they had developed a new appreciation for the complexity of schools and their relationship with society. For example, the students were now aware of the inequalities and injustices that exist in our schools, and that schools were different and should be treated differently with regards to reform, standards, and accountability. Additionally, while the students had envisioned communities as the creators of schools at the beginning of the semester, at the end of the semester they thought of schools as the creators of communities. Likewise, fifteen students reported that they had developed a new appreciation for or understanding of the complexity of teaching and schools, realizing that there is much more that needs to be done to improve our schools and that all hope is not lost because today's teachers and schools are trying to make a difference for tomorrow.

Concepts of democracy and voice were key ideas and practices used in the classroom throughout the semester to encourage the students' development of an appreciation and respect for diversity (whatever its form). When asked how the students had grown in their understanding and appreciation for diversity from this class, the students responded (25 of 27) with an overwhelming realization of the importance of diversity. For example, the students felt that they learned a lot from the differing opinions of their peers through the use of discussions, both small and large group. Additionally, they believed that it was important to hear the diverse ideas of their peers and that everyone in the class had the right to express him or herself. Others felt that diversity should be a part of every classroom, that they had learned how to appreciate and understand how to work with diversity in the classroom, and that diversity in the classroom helps to keep the mind creative. Finally, many students simply realized that people are different. People think differently, learn differently, and experience things differently in addition to the obvious differences such as race and gender that exits among them. With regards to diversity and the role that it may play in the classrooms of these future teachers, the students felt that there were a lot of different views about education and believed that diversity was a part of every classroom. More importantly, teachers must know how to work with diversity in the classroom because every student has the right to an equal, adequate and stimulating education.

On the first day of class, the students were introduced to Berg's 5 Master Questions. These questions were used to guide the class in their studies. Among many other things, the questions were intended to continue to guide the students through their growth and development as an educator after the class. When asked how these questions helped the them outside of the classroom and how the questions will help them in the future, the students stated: 1) the questions influenced their ways of thinking and philosophy of education, 2) they found the

general importance in the questions when thinking about education, 3) they saw the impact of the questions on their teaching, 4) they thought that the questions helped them understand students, and 5) they realized that the questions were tools that they can use whenever they read or hear something about education, including using it as an evaluation tool.

Today's children's literature takes real and difficult issues in society and places them in the touching context of a story. The intent of using children's literature in this course was to both introduce the students to quality literature and then show them how such literature could be used to foster meaningful conversation in the classroom. When asked if the use of children's literature added to students learning and understanding of issues in education the students' responses were all supportive. In general, the students appreciated the value of children's literature. They felt that books were a good idea, and that one is never too old to hear and learn from a story. Likewise, there was a small group of students who had never realized that children's literature could be so good, relate so well to the discussions that we were having, and be relaxing to hear at the same time. The students also recognized the benefits of using children's literature in the classroom. To begin with, ten students recognized that while the books were short and simple, they still held a great deal of meaning for the reader and were able to convey important messages. Likewise, by taking time in class to read children's literature the students are reminded of and helped to focus more on the "little" people they hoped to work with some day. Some of the students who wanted to become elementary teachers or just educators in general appreciated the modeling. Reading the books aloud helped the students understand how to use literature in the classroom to interact with students and raise questions about difficult subjects. With regards to teacher-training, one student stated, "We cannot always focus on college level material in order to learn about teaching and education. If we take a time to read an

actual book that a child might read, we can then understand more what literature says to children. We can be objective enough to see the child's point of view. I think as students, we can still learn form these books!"

The students were also asked to evaluate the materials that were used during the semester. This included an evaluation of the texts read and videos watched. The tables below show the students' ratings. The students were asked to rate the materials on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 meaning that the materials did not add anything to their understandings and 5 meaning that the material added a great deal to their understandings.

Average Rating of Books Read in Class

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Imperfect Panacea	2.0	5.0	3.740	.779
Teacher Story/Biography	3	5	4.68	.56
What to Look for in a Classroom	2	5	3.72	.89
Savage Inequalities	3	5	4.56	.71

Average Rating of Videos Viewed in Class

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Off Track - Heterogeneous Grouping	2	5	3.56	.71
Coalition of Essential Schools - Sizer	3	5	4.04	.86
Bill Ayers Lecture - USC	3	5	4.21	.83
Class Divided - Brown Eyes/Blue Eyes by PBS	3	5	4.68	.56
America's Children - Savage Inequalities	3	5	4.82	.50

Guest speakers were brought into the classroom to provide diverse ideas from a firsthand approach. The students were asked about what they liked about the different presentations, what they learned, if the presenters had shed any light on a topic that they hadn't thought much about, and if their understanding of education was furthered. Ms. Carleen Ward was one of the

presenters. She was a former schoolteacher from California who taught in an inner-city school where the majority of her students qualified for free and reduced meals and spoke Spanish as their first language. While Ms. Ward gave an overall informative presentation, some of the students struggled to make the connection between multicultural issues faced by a teacher in California with their development as a teacher in South Carolina. Again, in general the class appreciated the tips, stories, and challenges that she shared from her experiences as a teacher, but only one student commented on the fact that the presentation provoked him or her to think about diversity in schools. Dr. William Ruffle from the USC Department of Criminal Justice came to speak to the class about the relationship between race, crime, poverty, and ultimately, education. The majority of the class, 22 students, found Dr. Ruffle's presentation to be quite informative. They found his presentation to be very interesting and one that all educators should know about. Dr. Ruffle presented a great deal of facts throughout his presentation with regards to the age of youth, crime statistics, and historical issues associated with juvenile crimes. These facts shocked some of the students, while at the same time it made them more aware of the need of children, the relationship between schools and society, the relationship between poverty and crime, and what needs to be done on the side of education to help prevent or decrease problems of juvenile delinquency. There were three students in the class who did not like Dr. Ruffle's presentation. These students felt that he just presented facts and figures without real discussion of the issues, labeled "blacks" and focused too much on racial connections between crime and youth, and perpetuated stereotypes. Coincidently, these three students were African-American students, however, they were not the only African-American students in the class. The third speaker was Ms. Jennifer Somerindyke. Ms. Somerindyke is locally known for her research, writing, and presentations on the topic of childhood homelessness. All of the surveyed students found her

presentation to be enlightening and inspiring. Four of the students identified her as the best speaker. Ms. Somerindyke presented a variety of facts, laws, and issues to consider when addressing the education of children who were homeless. Thirteen of the students felt that she had shed light on a topic that was well-known, but not well-discussed, especially among teachers. Perhaps most importantly, one student admitted to correcting their misconceptions about homelessness and four students noted that they wanted to get involved with helping children who were homeless.

Seventeen of the twenty-five students surveyed were also enrolled in *EDUC 400: Service Learning*, a required practicum traditionally, however not required to be, taken in conjunction with *EDUC 300: Schools in Communities*. The students were asked to give their overall opinion of that experience and how the experience changed the way they viewed the relationship between schools and society. The students were placed at a variety of institutions, so there was a great variance in the quality of experience that they received. For example, some students worked in schools, some worked in community programs, and some even worked in the Department of Juvenile Justice. Some students, however, were placed at settings such as the Sylvan Learning Center and the South Carolina State Museum. Overall, eleven students felt positive about their experiences and three were negative. Similarly, some of the students were able to closely examine the importance of the relationship between schools and society and commented on topics such as teacher quality, how teachers and society view students, issues of priority, the gap between society and local school systems, the "behind the scenes" picture of education, the responsibility of a community to support its schools, the diversity of needs that diverse students have, the dependency of society on schools to fix everything, the fact that the quality of a school

often depends on its location, the correlation between race and wealth, and the fact that sometimes teachers are just babysitters.

Finally, the students were asked if they would be able or willing to attend fieldtrips (trips during class time and in the evenings) if they were an added component to the course. Nine of the students stated that they would be willing to go on fieldtrips because the fieldtrips would provide them with hands-on experiences and allow them to see teachers dealing with the issues that had been discussed in class. Ten more students said that they would be willing, but it depended upon such things as receiving extra credit, money for travel, advanced scheduling, or occurring only during class time. Six of the students stated that they would not be willing to go on fieldtrips because of commitments already made to work, other classes and family.

Conclusions

As mentioned above, there were three intended or expected outcomes of this action plan. Through the use of Berg's 5MQ's and Banks' dimensions of multicultural education as a framework for the design of this class undergraduate teacher-education class, it was expected that by making space for diversity in the classroom students would become empowered as they developed their understanding and appreciation for diversity in the classroom.

First, it was expected and then later evident that the students outgrew their personal understandings of schools and their relationships with communities. While much of the data collected is based off of what students said and wrote, success with this outcome was achieved. Second, it was expected that the students would develop an understanding and appreciation for diversity in our classroom, as well as future classrooms where current students would be teaching. This is perhaps harder to determine. As mentioned in the **Obstacles** section of the

action plan, the ultimate effects and impact of this action plan on students' perspectives cannot be seen immediately. While evidence of their understanding and appreciation for diversity appeared on paper and in the classroom, there is limited evidence to support that this action plan affected the ways the students think and ultimately their teaching practices in the future. Such evidence will require long-term conversations and observations with the students. Finally, it was expected that the students would increase their awareness of the many faces of teachers and students, as well as, teaching and learning. Again, most, if not all, that exists to support this conclusion are what the students have said and written. There is insufficient evidence to strongly support that what the students say positively correlates to the ways they act. As mentioned before, this plan clearly took a lot of time to both prepare and execute.

The goals of this plan were large and lofty. While this does not undermine the importance of this action plan, it made its implementation difficult. Consequently, only parts of the plan were implemented. Specifically, a collaborative effort was not made in the designing and evaluation of the students' work. Instead, the instructor crafted rubrics, which were then open for discussion and refinement. In most cases the students accepted what was presented to them. Curriculum textbooks were unattainable at this time to investigate. Likewise, time did not allow for the video tapping and consequent viewing of diverse teachers. The inquiry project is also expected to be implemented in the future. There were, however, many things that were accomplished in the plan. The students charted the changing role of the purpose of education, they discussed personal stories about their own learning experiences and natures, while not all of the students were able to carry out an ethnographic study, they were able to participate and discuss their observation from their practicum experiences, children's literature was used to introduce topics in education, and finally, a diverse set of text was used along with video and

internet cites. It is hoped that there were be time to refine and continue implementing the ideas of this plan into the classroom.

While the overall effects of this plan can be seen in the specific responses of the students, the final comments of the students speak to the effectiveness of the course and the action plan. At the end of the Exit Slips, the students were given the opportunity to provide additional comments. Twelve of the students said that they really enjoyed the class, and two of those students did not want to be an educator prior to this class but as a result have changed the way they viewed education and cannot wait to take another course in education. Fourteen of the students felt that the class opened their eyes to many educational issues and appreciated the variety of points and thought provoking questions about education that were addressed. Finally, the students appreciated that as an instructor I practiced what I preached. Perhaps in this attempt to bridge theory and practice, this was one of the strongest pieces of evidence yet.

References

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Appendix

Exit Slip
Course Syllabus
PowerPoint Presentation

Exit Slips
EDUC 300: Schools in Communities

We've covered a great deal of information, addressed many issues, and challenged our own answers over the course of the semester in EDUC 300. Before we leave, let's take time to look back and reflect. After all, successful teachers are ones with the ability to reflect on the beliefs and practices.

Please complete the following...

I used to think _____ about schools in

communities, but now I
know_____

_____

_____

_____

Democracy and voice were key ideas and practices in our classroom. An appreciation and respect for diversity (whatever its form) is a natural outreach of these ideas and practices. How have you grown in your understanding and appreciation for diversity from this class? (This can include your views as an educator, a student, or a member of society.)

On the first day of class, I introduced the five master questions to you. Those questions guided our studies. Hopefully, they will continue to guide you through your growth and development as an educator. How have these questions helped you outside of our classroom, and how do you predict they will help you in the future?

Please evaluate the following books:

	I learned a great deal from this book.				This book did not add to my understandings.
J. H. Perkinson, The Imperfect Panacea	5	4	3	2	1
Comments:					
Teacher Story/Biography	5	4	3	2	1
Comments:					
A. Kohn, What to Look for in a Classroom	5	4	3	2	1
Comments:					
J. Kozol, Savage Inequalties	5	4	3	2	1
Comments:					

I have used children's literature at times in the class to introduce you to both a variety of quality children's literature that can be used in any classroom and issues in education. Did you enjoy the books? Why? Do you recommend that I use them in the future?

Briefly describe your thoughts on these guest speakers. What did you like about their presentations? Did you learn anything from them? Did they shed light on a topic that you hadn't thought much about? Did they further your understanding of the field of education?

Carleen Ward - Teacher from California:

Dr. William Ruffle - Dept. of Criminal Justice:

Jennifer Sumerindyke - Childhood Homelessness:

Please rate these videos: add	I learned a great deal from this video.				This video did not add to my understandings.
Off Track Heterogenously grouping literature classes in H.S.	5	4	3	2	1
A Class Divided Blue eyes, brown eyes	5	4	3	2	1
Coalition of Essential Schools Ted Sizer	5	4	3	2	1
Bill Ayers					

Lecture at USC	5	4	3	2	1
America's Children Savage Inequalities	5	4	3	2	1

Some of you were enrolled in the EDUC 400: Service Learning practicum. Briefly explain your experience (Where was it at? What did you get to do?) What is you overall opinion of that experience? What if anything would you change about it?

How has your EDUC 4000 experience changed the way you view the relationship between schools and society?

If fieldtrips (trips during class time and in the evenings) were an added component to this course (EDUC 300), do you think you would be able to attend them? If not, why?

Any additional comments that you'd like to add?

Schools in Communities
EDUC 300, Fall 2000

Tracy Schuster
schudr@yahoo.com
Office: 777-0324

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 to 10:45
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9 to 9:30 or by appointment in Wardlaw 020

Schools in Communities introduces students to the foundations of education by studying social, philosophical, and historical aspects of American culture. Through the examination of classical and current educational issues and dilemmas, students will come to better understand the forces and influences that guide the American educational system, as well as, the day-to-day events within the classroom. By focusing on the experience of master teachers and the teaching experience gained in the EDUC 400 teaching practicum, students will better understand themselves as both educators and students.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A LEARNER:

1) It is essential that you be willing to read your assignments on time, think about the ideas contained in them, and come to class prepared to discuss them intelligently.

2) Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings. Our discussions will add a lot to your learning and how you think as a teacher. Miss a day, and you'll be missing a lot.

3) It is critical that you keep up with the reading in this course. The amount and complexity of the material are such that falling behind is almost always leads to serious problems. It is expected that you can read, think, analyze, interpret and write at the level of a college student. You will be under pressure in this class to perform at a high level. Daily measures of your understandings of the assigned readings will be taken to monitor your growth.

THE FIVE MASTER QUESTIONS (5MQ'S):

1. What is the nature of the learner?
2. What is the purpose of education?
3. What should be taught/learned?
4. How should we teach that which should be taught/learned?
5. What is the relationship between schools and society?

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Midterm

T/F, multiple choice, and short answer over the Perkinson text.

Teacher biography paper based on 5MQ's

This paper will give a brief summary/description of the chosen teacher biography, as well as, analyze and provide specific examples of how the teacher addressed the 5MQ'S. (A grading rubric will be provided.) 3 to 4 pages.

Portfolio of current educational issues

A collection of current events and issues regarding education in the United States. Each artifact should be accompanied with a brief reflection on which of the five Master Questions it answers. All sources should be documented. (A grading rubric will be provided)

Final - Philosophy on education (incorporating EDUC 400 Practicum and 5MQ's)

This paper will incorporate the literature and issues discussed in EDUC 300, as well as experiences from EDUC 400 into a personal philosophy on education. Of course, this too will be written as pertaining to the five master questions. (A grading rubric will be provided.) 4 to 6 pages.

GRADES

Midterm	30 pts	A	90-100 pts
Teacher biography	20 pts	B	80-89 pts
Portfolio	10 pts	C	70- 79 pts
Daily measures	10 pts	D	60-69 pts
Final paper	30 pts	F	59 pts and below
Total	100pts		

ASSIGNED READINGS (3)

1. Perkinson, H. J. (19). *The Imperfect Panacea.* McGraw-Hill.

2. Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage Inequalities.* Harperperennial Library.

3. Kohn, A. (1998) *What to Look for in a Classroom.* Jossey-Bass.

4. Choose one of the following teacher biographies to read.

   Elementary Educators

   - *Teacher,* by S. Ashton-Warner
   - *Educating Esme': Diary of a Teacher's First Year,* by E. Codell
   - *Among School Children,* by T. Kidder
   - *How to Survive in Your Native Land,* by James Herndon
   - *Dreamkeepers,* by G Ladson-Billings

   Junior High/Middle School Educators

   - *1st year teacher,* by R. Bullough
   - *1st year teacher 8 years later,* by R. Bullough

   Secondary Educators

   - *Horace's Compromise,* by T. Sizer
   - *Horace's School,* by T Sizer
   - *Horace's Hope,* by T Sizer
   - *The Blackboard Jungle,* by E. Hunter
   - *Up the Down Staircase,* by B. Kaufman
   - *Vertigo,* by L. De Salvo
   - *The Water is Wide,* by P. Conroy
   - *Black Teachers on Teaching,* by M. Foster
   - *Crossing the Boundaries,* by William Finigan
   - *Walking the Tightrope,* by Elizabeth De Villiers

*This list is not exhaustive. If you have or know of a biography that you would like to read that is not listed, please feel free to see me about using it.

COURSE CALENDAR	READING CALENDAR
Aug 24 What is the nature of the learner? MQ1	Perkinson, *The Imperfect Panacea*
Aug 29 MQ1	Chapter 1
Aug 31 MQ1	Chapter 2
Sept 5 MQ1	Chapter 3
Sept 7 MQ1	Chapter 4
Sept 12 What is the purpose of education? MQ2	Chapter 5
Sept 14 MQ2	Chapter 6
Sept 19 MQ2	Chapter 7
Sept 21 MQ2	*Self-Selected Teacher Biography*
Sept 26 MQ2	
Sept 28 Mid-term – Perkinson	
Oct 3 What should be taught/learned? MQ3	
Oct 5 MQ3	
Oct 10 MQ3	
Oct 12 MQ3	Kohn, *What to Look for in a Classroom*
Oct 19 MQ3 Teacher Biography Paper Due	Chapter 1, 3
Oct 24 How should we teach that which should be taught/learned? MQ4	Chapter 7, 8
Oct 26 MQ4	Chapter 11
Oct 31 MQ4	Chapter 14, 15, 16
Nov 2 MQ4	Chapter 17
Nov 9 MQ4	Chapter 18
Nov 14 MQ4	Chapter 19
Nov 16 What is the relationship between schools and society? MQ5	Kozol, *Savage Inequalities*
Nov 21 MQ5	Chapter 1
Nov 28 MQ5	Chapter 2
Nov 30 MQ5	Chapter 3
Dec 5 MQ5	Chapter 4
Dec 7 Portfolio Due / MQ5	Chapter 5, 6

Dec 8 Final – Paper due to room 135 Wardlaw by 5 pm